



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/740,708 | 12/19/2000 | George D. Chandley | GM142 | 5022 |

7590

12/17/2002

Mr. Edward J. Timmer
Walnut Woods Centre
5955 W. Main Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

EXAMINER

COMBS, JANELL A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1742

DATE MAILED: 12/17/2002

10

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/740,708

Applicant(s)

CHANDLEY ET AL.

Examiner

Janelle Combs-Morillo

Art Unit

1742

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on response filed on October 1, 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 10-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 00/45973 (WO'973) in view of Nazmy et al (US 5,286,442 A).

WO'973 teaches a process of using a titanium aluminide machine components (such as hot sleeves, plungers, dies, extrusion dies, holders for filters in permanent mold casting, page 2 lines 12-16) or mixing blades (page 2 line 10) for contacting molten aluminum (page 2 lines 6-7). WO'973 teaches the use of a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy typically 30-35wt% Al and 55-65wt% Ti (page 6 lines 18-23). WO'973 teaches that said Ti-Al alloy machine component or mixer blade can be oxidized to provide a surface oxide film by heating to a temperature $\geq 800^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$), followed by cooling in air (page 5 lines 22-34).

Concerning independent claims 10 and 21, WO'973 does not teach the use of a Ti-Al alloy including a rare earth element in an effective amount to prolong resistance to attack of the alloy by the molten material, as presently claimed. However, Nazmy teaches gamma phase Ti-Al alloys intended for machine components (abstract), and teaches that certain alloying additions (such as Yttrium) provide for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54, Exemplary embodiment 54 and 56), enabling the field of application of the modified

Art Unit: 1742

Ti-Al alloys to be extended to temperatures between 600-1000°C (column 14 lines 52-54).

Nazmy teaches example alloys 14 (50at% Ti, 2 at%Y, 48at% Al), 15 (49at% Ti, 3 at%Y, 48at% Al), 21 (48.5at% Ti, 3 at%Y, 48at% Al, 0.5at% B), and 23 (48.5at% Ti, 3 at%Y, 48at% Al, 0.5at% Ge) that fall with the scope of the instant claim, and Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 show that Yttrium provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures. It would have been obvious to add Yttrium to the Ti-Al alloy taught by WO'973 (wherein the Ti-Al alloy is in the form of a mixing blade, etc. useful for contacting molten aluminum, WO'973 at page 2 lines 6-7), because Nazmy teaches that adding a rare earth metal such as Yttrium to a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54).

Concerning dependent claim 11, as stated above, WO'973 teaches the use of a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy.

Concerning dependent claim 12, and 22-24, as stated above, Nazmy teaches example alloy 14 (50at% Ti, 2 at%Y, 48at% Al is equivalent to 61.9wt%, 4.6wt% Y, 33.5wt% Al) which falls within the scope of the instant claims. It would have been obvious to add Yttrium to the Ti-Al alloy taught by WO'973, because Nazmy teaches that adding a rare earth metal such as Yttrium to a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54).

Concerning dependent claims 13-15, WO'973 teaches the formation of a surface oxide, as stated above. WO'973 teaches that said Ti-Al alloy machine component or mixer blade can be oxidized to provide a surface oxide film by heating to a temperature $\geq 800^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$), followed by cooling in air (page 5 lines 22-34).

Concerning independent claim 16, the examiner points out that WO'973 teaches a process of die casting comprising the steps of: oxidizing the Ti-Al alloy to provide a surface oxide film by heating to a temperature $\geq 800^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$), followed by cooling in air (page 5 lines 22-34), injecting molten aluminum into the Ti-Al shot sleeve between the Ti-Al die halves (page 7 lines 25-30), removing said die cast aluminum article and injecting additional molten aluminum, wherein said process includes cycling the Ti-Al die halves to molten aluminum temperatures (typically $>600^{\circ}\text{C}$), and wherein said temperature is sufficient to re-form a oxide surface film (forms naturally at temperatures $\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$, WO'973 at page 6 lines 1-7).

WO'973 does not specify reheating to form a surface oxide (for a second cycle). However, as stated above, the temperature of molten aluminum temperatures is sufficient to re-form a oxide surface film (which forms naturally at temperatures $\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$, WO'973 at page 6 lines 1-7). Therefore, it is held that WO'973 has created a prima facie case of obviousness of the presently claimed invention.

Concerning dependent claim 17, WO'973 teaches heating the alloy in an oxygen atmosphere prior to first contacting the Ti-Al alloy with the molten material.

Concerning claims 18-20, WO'973 does not teach the use of a Ti-Al alloy including a rare earth element in an effective amount to prolong resistance to attack of the alloy by the molten material, as presently claimed. However, as stated above, Nazmy teaches gamma phase Ti-Al alloys intended for machine components (abstract), and teaches that the addition of Yttrium provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54, Exemplary embodiment 54 and 56). It would have been obvious to add Yttrium to the Ti-Al alloy taught by WO'973, because Nazmy teaches that adding a rare earth metal such as Yttrium

Art Unit: 1742

to a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54).

Response to Amendment/Arguments

3. In the response filed on October 1, 2002, applicant amended claims 1 and 16.

The argument that the instant invention is allowable because “WO’973 document provides no disclosure or suggestion whatsoever that such resistance to attack can be so dramatically prolonged by including a rare earth element in a titanium aluminide alloy” (arguments bottom of page 3, also pages 4-6), has not been found persuasive. As stated above, Nazmy is relied on for the teaching of adding a rare earth element to improve temperature resistance (see above).

The argument that the prior art does not teach that the addition of a rare earth element “would have an effect of any kind on the alloy with respect to attack by such molten material” (arguments page 5 lines 17-19) has not been found persuasive. As stated above, Nazmy teaches gamma phase Ti-Al alloys intended for ‘machine components’ (abstract), and teaches that certain alloying additions (such as Yttrium) provide for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54, Exemplary embodiment 54 and 56), enabling the field of application of the modified Ti-Al alloys to be extended to temperatures between 600-1000°C (column 14 lines 52-54). With regard to the ‘machine components’ that Nazmy mentions, WO’973 teaches that hot sleeves, plungers, dies, extrusion dies, holders for filters in permanent mold casting, (WO’973 page 2 lines 12-16) or mixing blades (WO’973 page 2 line 10) for

Art Unit: 1742

contacting molten aluminum (WO'973 page 2 lines 6-7) are typical Ti-Al high temperature resistant machine components.

The argument that the prior art does not meet instant claim 16 has not been found persuasive. As stated above, WO'973 teaches a process of die casting comprising the steps of: oxidizing the Ti-Al alloy to provide a surface oxide film by heating to a temperature $\geq 800^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$), followed by cooling in air (page 5 lines 22-34), injecting molten aluminum into the Ti-Al shot sleeve between the Ti-Al die halves (page 7 lines 25-30), removing said die cast aluminum article and injecting additional molten aluminum, wherein said process includes cycling the Ti-Al die halves to molten aluminum temperatures (typically $>600^{\circ}\text{C}$), and wherein said temperature is sufficient to re-form a oxide surface film (forms naturally at temperatures $\geq 427^{\circ}\text{C}$, WO'973 at page 6 lines 1-7).

The argument that applicant has shown unexpected results with regard to the prior art of record (arguments page 6, etc), has not been found persuasive. As stated above, Nazmy teaches that certain alloying additions (such as Yttrium) provide for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54, Exemplary embodiment 54 and 56), enabling the field of application of the modified Ti-Al alloys to be extended to temperatures between 600-1000°C (column 14 lines 52-54).

Double Patenting

4. Claims 10-15 and 21-24 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,283,195 B1 (hereinafter US'195) in view of Nazmy et al (US 5,286,442 A). The claims of US'195 teach a

Art Unit: 1742

method of contacting molten aluminum with tooling (such as a mixer blade, US'195 claim 2, or a die for die casting, US'195 claim 5) made from passivated Ti-Al alloy (predominately gamma, see US'195 claim 2) with a surface oxide film (US'195 claim 1) wherein said oxide film is formed in-situ by contact at elevated temperature with an oxygen bearing atmosphere.

The claims of US'195 do not teach the use of a Ti-Al alloy including a rare earth element in an effective amount to prolong resistance to attack of the alloy by the molten material, as presently claimed. However, as stated above, Nazmy teaches gamma phase Ti-Al alloys intended for machine components (abstract), and teaches that certain alloying additions (such as Yttrium) provide for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (column 15 lines 25-54, Exemplary embodiment 54 and 56), enabling the field of application of the modified Ti-Al alloys to be extended to temperatures between 600-1000°C (column 14 lines 52-54). Nazmy teaches example alloy 14 (50at% Ti, 2 at%Y, 48at% Al is equivalent to 61.9wt%, 4.6wt% Y, 33.5wt% Al).

It would have been obvious to add Yttrium to the Ti-Al alloy taught by the claims of US'195, because Nazmy teaches that adding a rare earth metal such as Yttrium to a gamma phase Ti-Al alloy provides for excellent hardness and strength at high temperatures (Nazmy at column 15 lines 25-54).

5. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground

Art Unit: 1742

provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Janelle Combs-Morillo whose telephone number is (703) 308-4757. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 am- 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (703) 308-1146. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 873-9311 for After Final communications.

Application/Control Number: 09/740,708

Page 9

Art Unit: 1742

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

GEORGE WYSZOMIERSKI
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Jcm 

December 16, 2002